

**“Casting Cares”
2 Kings 19; Peter 5:7**

2 Kings 19 verse 10:

“Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush, was marching out to fight against him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word:

“Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.’ ¹¹ Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? ¹² Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?”

¹⁴ Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. ¹⁵ And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: “LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ Give ear, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God.

¹⁷ “It is true, LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. ¹⁸ They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. ¹⁹ Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God.”

Then verse 35:

That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! ³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.”

So that’s our text this morning.

It features King Hezekiah, one of the good kings of Judah in amongst a line of wicked and evil kings.

He wasn't perfect; he was fallible but he was faithful.

Just by way of the back story, Sennacherib, the king of the Assyrian empire, is on the march, and Judah and Jerusalem and Hezekiah are next on his list.

He's delayed by the king of Egypt and so sends a letter to say this a minor inconvenience and the Hezekiah and Jerusalem's time will come.

This letter reaches Hezekiah and hits like a ton of bricks.
The psychological impact was the size of a boulder.

And for good reason.

These kings were known for their cruel treatment of their defeated foes. Scripture doesn't delve into the details but the original recipients were well aware of what these pagan kings were capable of.

I mean, I had some idea and in my research I discovered more than I wanted to know.

What archaeologists have discovered is that King Sennacherib had relief's on his palace walls that depicted his victories.¹

A 'relief' is a sculptured wall something like this:



What these relief's in Sennacherib palace portrayed was the common practice of Assyrian soldiers killing their fallen enemies by peeling off their skin or decapitating them or cutting off their hands, the dismembering of genitals, impaling, and burning them alive.

¹ [Archaeology news: 'Horrific evidence' proves Bible right about cruel Assyrian armies | Science | News | Express.co.uk](https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1111111/archaeology-news-horrific-evidence-proves-bible-right-about-cruel-assyrian-armies)

And Sennacherib took great pleasure in immortalising these acts on his palace walls.

The message was clear to any dignitaries from other nations: “This is what is in store for you if you don’t bow the knee to me.”

These stories would have gotten out and Hezekiah knows what is in store for him and everyone in Jerusalem.

This is no veiled threat.

So what about you this morning?

Have you received a letter or an email recently that hit you like a ton of bricks?

Or maybe phone call?

It could even a conversation and now anxious thoughts invade your mental space.

It could all manner of events.

Or maybe it was something you did?

Sometimes stuff like that doesn’t go away quickly.

It’s lingers.

And then you may find this: it takes on a new life of its own.

Then you find it sits there in the background of everything you do.

It’s no longer an inconvenience – it’s a burden, an imposing presence that you bear 24 hours a day, 7 days of the week.

Earlier this year I asked the question, “How do you know if you’re burdened?”

I talked about being ‘lumbered’ – moving under a heavy, awkward weight.

It’s be encumbered. Weighed down. Burdened.

Then I gave you some signs are that you’re burdened?

That you’re carrying stuff.

Do you remember them?

Do you remember the signs?

(One sign is memory loss 😊)

Well again tell the person next to you.

“How do you know if you’re burdened?”

Okay, get your checklist out:

- You don't sleep well.

You may wake up in the middle of the night thinking about an issue or issues or it may even invade your dreams.

- Another: you feel it's weight almost physically.

A weight on your mind becomes like a weight on your body.

The shoulders slump.

So you feel it's weight.. and it also takes your focus.

There are such things as tension headaches

- Here's one and I want you to hear this: you sigh a lot.

sigh

We all sigh at times but when you're burdened it's constant.

- Then there are some people and they fire up, at everyone and everything.

Everything and everyone's a problem!

Jesus said, "Out of the mouth the heart speaks"² and out the mouth comes all sorts of complaints... that find their source in your burden.

- It saps the joy out of your life.

You know, joy is the exuberance and lightness of spirit found in Christ.

With joyful people there is a genuine levity they carry about with them.

There is a lightness in the step.

So imagine this bucket is your life.



The water that fills the bucket is the life and joy and hope and peace that comes from knowing Jesus.

When you are carrying burden, like rocks in a bucket, the burdens displace your life and joy and hope and peace found in Him.

As I mentioned feel psychologically and emotionally but also at times physically.

And our passion in following Jesus becomes impeded.

You can't live lightly.

So for me there are times when I lose my peace and my joy because I've taken on a burden I'm not meant to carry.

² Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45

The longer we hold on to them, the heavier they become.

So what do you do?

What you need to do is to delve into your bucket and pull out and name that which has become a burden to for.

It may be a hurt.
You've been hurt and it's hard to let go.

It may be a resentment.
It could be from hurt or words said, that you've not let go.

It could be a failure.

It could be in the area of regret.
Some people carry regrets with them for years and even decades.
"If only..."

It could be in the area of relationships.

It could be parent.
Maybe a parent is causing you concern or grief.
It could be a spouse.

It could be a concern about a child.
Maybe an adult child is not walking with Lord despite your best efforts.
And you're beating yourself up.

Maybe it's a big decision you have to make.
Some decisions are just overwhelmingly huge.

It could be work or employment related.

It could be school.

I've said this previously, for pastors and ministers and leaders it's often the local church.
They can feel the great weight of church's health and future weight heavily on their shoulders.
They have deep loving concern for the people they shepherd.
The expectations can pile up.

Whatever it is, you're carrying it like an unbearable weight.

So you delve into your bucket and you've named it - what do you do then?

What did Hezekiah do?

He had this murderous king and his army only a few days away from being on his doorstep.

His heart would have ran cold when the letter arrived from the Sennacherib.

We're told that when Hezekiah received the letter,

“...he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD.”

Hezekiah he laid out his burden, a letter, before the Lord.

He a gave it over to Him.

That's brilliant.

Jesus said in Matthew 11 verse 28:

“Come to me all of you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest... I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find *rest* for your souls.”

Only Jesus can offer the rest we need but we often think we can manage our burdens better than he can.

Then 1 Peter 5 verse 7 say tells us to “Cast all your cares on him for he cares for you”.

Psalms 55 verse 22 is the same verse and uses the word “burden”.

In other words *take that is a worry and anxiety and a burden for you and deliberately place it in the hands of God...that you find rest for your soul that you've been seeking.*

It is not passive.

So what's the mechanism, what's the means by which you cast your cares on the Lord? How do you put legs on that?

Hezekiah had mean for doing this.

A friend I who by his own admittance, has a had a life marked by deep hurts and dysfunction.

So what does is what he calls, 'grievance work'.

Every now and then he delves in to his bucket to see if there is anything there that is weighing him down from his past.

He would write these down, and says this:

“In a radical symbolic gesture I screwed up each bit of paper on which I had documented aspects of my history and threw them into the rubbish bin. Then kneeling down in a posture of surrender I unclasped my clenched fists and raised open palms to God. I prayed that he would take the pain of my past, infuse it with his grace and redeem it so it could be transformed into something good.”

And you know, for me with church and ministry, one of the great liberating aspects and realisations I came to was this: this church isn't my church. (It isn't your church either).

You may have attended here all your life and served in different capacities but it's still not your church.

Yes, we have time, talents and treasure to offer. We are part of His Body and have gifts to offer in His service.

Jesus said I will build my Church.³

He is the Head and Chief Shepherd of this church.

The church isn't my church or your church - it's Christ's church.

So my confession - my verbal confession - is often, “Lord Jesus, this is your church. I place it again in your hands.”

So this morning is we're going to spend some to stand and spend some time in silence.

As we stand, if you have burden I invite you to silently name before God.

Then we're going to sing.

As we sing I invite come and take a stone from this bucket and place it at the foot of the cross as way of casting your burden into the hands of God.

³ Matthew 16:18